

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	Czechoslovakia	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Self-Recovery of Bogged-Down Tanks in the Czech Army	DATE DISTR.	7
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This is UNEVALUATED Information

SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

1. The usual tow ropes are not permitted to be used for tank recovery. A bogged-down tank must use its own resources for its recovery; another tank must not be used because it would provide an easy target for the enemy during the recovery operation and it would also temporarily shorten the combat unit by another tank. If necessary, a special tank is used for recovery.
2. By self-recovery is meant the operation whereby the tank is recovered without outside help with the means which it has at its own disposal. The T-34/85 tanks and SD-105 self-propelled guns are not fitted with winches; so the self-recovery has to be carried out by means of recovery ropes and wooden blocks.
3. Each vehicle carries two pairs of ropes for recovery purposes which are fastened to the side walls of the vehicle body when not in use. The ropes are about four meters long and are made of twisted steel wire about 2.5 centimeters thick. Both ends of the ropes are firmly inserted into metal eyeholes for slipping on a steel coupling band (see the sketch, point #2). The two ropes are held about 30-35 centimeters from one another and the ends are firmly fixed in a steel coupling band. The steel bands have holes at their ends 1.5 centimeters in diameter which are identical with the holes in the links of the tank track; the holes are used for screwing the coupling bands to the track.
4. A further item of self-recovery equipment is a wooden block at least 4 meters long, about 35-50 centimeters thick, and either square or rounded. Each vehicle carries with it one of these blocks, although, in case of need, a round section from a tree or any odd beam may be used.
5. When the tank is bogged down, the ropes are first fastened loosely to the track by means of the steel bands. The bands are then screwed to the links or merely fastened by pins. Meanwhile, a wooden block is pushed underneath both tracks. Where the ground is soft, both ropes are twisted round the block, forming a knot so that the block cannot slip out when the ropes are

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drawn tight. The wooden block is usually placed under the driving sprocket. When the tank is brought into motion, the block is driven into the ground, the track travels over it, and the tank moves ahead at least three meters. If more movement is needed to free the vehicle, the procedure with the block must be repeated from the beginning. The recovery process must always be checked by an outside observer, since the wooden block may reach the end of the vehicle and damage the rear drive.

6. This method of self-recovery has proved to be very efficient and useful and after the first tests it was introduced into general use in a very short time. It can be carried out in both directions, forwards and backwards, if the block is placed in the appropriate position for each.



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Legend for the sketches

1. Rope of twisted steel wire.
2. Metal eye for hooking on the coupling band.
3. Fastening holes of the coupling bands.
4. Wooden block.
5. Links of the track.
6. Tank track.
7. Driving sprocket.
8. Bogie wheels.



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